

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-16, and 21-32 were pending in this application prior to entry of the present amendments. Claims 14-16 and 21-31 were withdrawn in the Response to the Restriction Requirement filed on February 13, 2009. Claims 4 and 17-20 were cancelled in a previous action without prejudice. Claims 11 and 29 have been cancelled herein. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of the cancelled claims at a later date. No new claims have been added. The present amendments do not add new matter.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing independent Claim 32. Applicant respectfully submits that this claim is allowable not only for reciting rods arranged in parallel, but also for reciting additional distinguishing features recited in the claims in combination with rod arranged in parallel.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-3 and 5-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Daniels (US 6,045,076) in view of Chu (U.S. 5,831,417). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections and the assertions made in the Office Action on what the cited art shows or teaches. Nevertheless, Applicant has amended the claims to depend from allowed Claim 32, and thus views these rejections as moot. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 2-3, 5-10, 12, and 13 are likewise allowable over Daniels in view of Chu as each of these claims recites a unique combination of features not taught or suggested by the cited art.

Rejoinder

Claims 14-16 and 21-31 were withdrawn as being directed to an unelected invention. Applicant respectfully requests that these claims be rejoined, at least because they now depend from allowed Claim 32.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request the same. Although the present communication may include alterations to the application or claims, or characterizations of claim scope or referenced art, Applicants are not conceding in this application that previously pending claims are not patentable over the cited references. Rather, any alterations or characterizations are being made to facilitate expeditious prosecution of this application. Applicants reserve the right to pursue at a later date any previously pending or other broader or narrower claims that capture any subject matter supported by the present disclosure, including subject matter found to be specifically disclaimed herein or by any prior prosecution. Accordingly, reviewers of this or any parent, child or related prosecution history shall not reasonably infer that Applicants have made any disclaimers or disavowals of any subject matter supported by the present application.

Furthermore, any remarks in support of patentability of one claim should not be imputed to any other claim, even if similar terminology is used. Any remarks referring to only a portion of a claim should not be understood to base patentability on that portion or that the limitation discussed is essential or critical; rather, patentability must rest on each claim taken as a whole. Applicants respectfully traverse each of the Examiner's rejections and each of the Examiner's assertions regarding what the prior art shows or teaches, even if not expressly discussed herein. Although changes to the claims have been made, no acquiescence, disclaimer or estoppel is intended or should be implied thereby; such amendments are made only to expedite prosecution of the present application and are without prejudice to the presentation or assertion, in the future, of claims relating to the same or similar subject matter. Applicants may not have presented in all cases, arguments concerning whether the applied references can be properly combined or modified in view of the deficiencies noted above, and Applicants reserve the right to later contest whether the cited references can be properly combined or modified.

The undersigned has made a good faith effort to respond to all of the rejections in the case and to place the claims in condition for immediate allowance. Nevertheless, if any undeveloped issues remain or if any issues require clarification, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicants' attorney in order to resolve such issue promptly.

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Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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AMEND

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